Shaping society 5.0 Building trust in AI as a force for good

Democratization, collaboration and education – paving a way for AI to benefit us all

Foreword

By Harold Pradal,
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2023 will be viewed as the point that Artificial Intelligence (AI) tipped into the mainstream, with a 286% rise in media coverage of the topic[1]. And whilst headlines were grabbed by ChatGPT, the real AI story is much, much deeper.

This transformational technology is accelerating progress – and has the potential to go further as a force for good and move us towards Society 5.0, a 'human-centered society that balances economic and technological advancement to solve society's problems'[2]. Importantly, it also raises questions around how we build trust in AI and what guardrails are needed to ensure AI shapes our future in a positive way.

In this collection we go behind the headlines to explore the real-world impact of AI through the eyes of BSI experts, drawing on the views of 10,000 people in nine countries. For anyone in doubt, AI is here and it's here to stay – 38% of people use AI in their jobs daily, rising to 70% in China and 64% in India. By 2030, 62% expect their industry will use AI[3].

At BSI we are committed to shaping the impact of technology and innovation for the benefit of individuals, organizations and society. AI sits at the heart of this because it has the potential to be a powerful partner, changing lives and accelerating progress towards a better future and a sustainable world.

We commissioned these essays to turn the spotlight on this generational opportunity – recognizing that the better we understand it, the better we can harness its power. Whether it's creating new workplace opportunities, improving patient outcomes, tackling modern slavery or building a safe global food system, AI has a pivotal role to play.

We examine the importance of embedding digital trust in AI, the critical role for collaboration – between nations, policymakers, organizations and individuals – to unlock AI's true potential, and the fast-evolving regulation designed to ensure consistency and certainty.

With AI crossing over from small, contained environments into mainstream technology at work and at home, this offers a transformational opportunity to unlock a multitude of benefits – provided trust and confidence are present too.

AI is just getting started. At BSI we are excited to partner with our clients as we embark on this journey. We are delighted to present these essays to explore the enormous potential AI offers to shape Society 5.0 and deliver a sustainable future powered by innovation.

1. Signal search analysis 2022-2023.
2. Society 5.0: The Fundamental Concept Of A Human-Centered Society, Open Business Council, Aug 2023
3. BSI Trust in AI Poll 2023

Democratization, collaboration and education – paving a way for AI to benefit us all

As a purpose-driven organization, BSI believes AI can be a force for good, changing lives, making a positive impact on society, and accelerating progress towards a sustainable world. In this essay, Dénelise L'Ecluse, Managing Director, Assurance – Continental Europe, explores the steps that organizations can take to help ensure that the benefits of AI are enjoyed equitably across society.

By Dénelise L'Ecluse

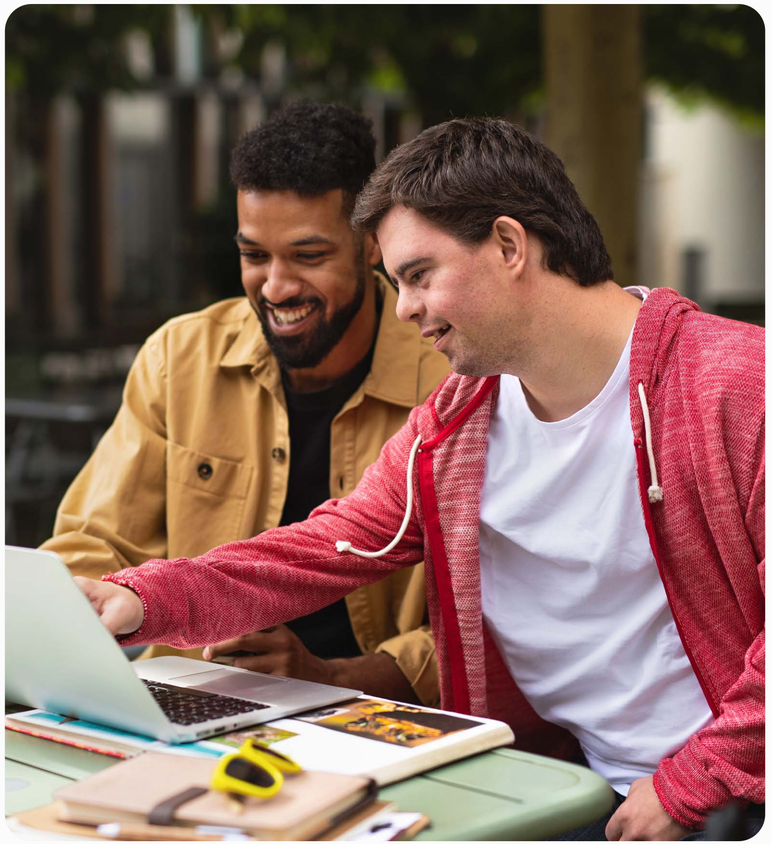
Managing Director, Assurance, Continental Europe, BSI

It's easy to assume that everyone is online and connected. In fact, over a third of people have never used the internet[1]. In that light, it is unsurprising that more than half of respondents in BSI's Trust in AI Poll[2] (51%) expressed concern that AI risks exacerbating social divides between those who have access to skills or technology and those who don't.

But this isn't a foregone conclusion – we can act now to ensure AI is a force for good. The burgeoning AI transformation could be just the catalyst needed for us to partner across society to address the digital divide.

AI's emerging power to shape our future represents a major opportunity for us to drive progress and ultimately meet UN Sustainable Development Goal 10[3] to reduce inequality within and between countries. As we embark on our global AI journey, democratizing its use could be seen as pivotal, bolstered by a collaborative, inclusive position on ensuring oversight and deep-rooted focus on education.

- Democratizing technology could be the key to building a sustainable world.
- Organizations can help close the equality gap by collaborating to create new technology and help shape oversight.
- Education is at the heart of everything – training the next generation can help us better harness the true power of AI.



The opportunity of AI to enable a more equitable world

Technology offers the power to help us create a sustainable world and a better future, whether that's in terms of the food we eat, how we respond to disease or how we manage climate change. But we are likely to have more opportunity to maximize its transformational potential if we put it into everyone's hands. As with any innovation – the internet, for example – the more people who use it, the more ideas we can generate and the more it can make an impact.

It is early days, but it's possible to foresee how AI could be transformative in bridging social divides[4]. In education, this could include AI acting as a personal tutor[5], or overcoming language or skill barriers so that anyone, anywhere, can benefit from higher quality education. 27% of people globally (polled by BSI) expect AI to be used in schools by 2030, for example with robotic teachers delivering tailored educational plans, while 17% put AI improving access to a top-quality education as a key priority for 2050.

There's a clear role for AI to support teachers – research from McKinsey[6] found that teachers work an average of 50 hours per week, spending less than half of that time directly interacting with students. In addition, they often cite unmanageable administrative tasks[7] as their primary source of burnout – by automating tasks such as timetable creation, AI could free up teachers' time to foster enhanced relationships with their students and offer individualized learning experiences.

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The current picture

Along with security and safety measures to engender trust, closing the digital divide and enabling accessibility can help us to realize the benefits of AI. There are several areas in which we can come together on this, not least by ensuring all nations are well prepared for AI to become commonplace.

Currently, research[8] suggests not all nations are well equipped for use of AI in their public services, with some lacking key foundations including a robust technology sector or adequate data infrastructure. The World Economic Forum (WEF)[9] has highlighted that while wealthier countries are focused on designing, developing and deploying AI algorithms to enable economic growth, others are "experiencing the rise of industries that engage low-skilled workers to perform data labelling and correction within the AI value-chain". Notably, 64% of people in India say they use AI at work day-to-day, well above the global average of 38%.

Additionally, wealth disparities within countries remain sizeable. The costs attached to AI – for example, the monthly fee for ChatGPT Plus[10] – could deter all but the wealthy few. Ensuring equitable access to AI is a huge undertaking, but if we want to accelerate progress towards a sustainable world, it's essential we put inclusive technology at the centre of our efforts.

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Education is at the heart of everything

From BSI's poll, it became clear that people already use AI-powered technology regularly without being aware they are doing so. For example, 62% of us are using curated playlists and 57% are using facial recognition - but in both cases over half weren't clear that they use AI. Bridging this understanding gap is critical.

So alongside access to technology, at the heart of everything is education and ensuring that people are equipped to utilize AI and make informed decisions about it. 55% of those surveyed in BSI's poll said we need to be training young people now for working in an AI-powered world – something data suggests is not commonplace at present[11].

Of course, education is not just for the young. Enabling everybody in an organization to become aware of how AI can augment their work starts with them being able to gain those basic skills and then having access to continuous learning.

In 2020 – before AI was on most people's minds – a WEF report on the future of jobs[12] said we will need to reskill more than 1 billion people by 2030. It's true that the nature of some jobs is changing thanks to AI and especially generative AI (AI that is capable of creating content), as LinkedIn's research shows[13]. But even where this is not the case, society at large can benefit from continuous education to ensure we get the best out of developing technologies.

Education is not the responsibility of the few, but something to be delivered collaboratively across society – by nations, governments, organizations and individuals. All of these entities partnering together can harness the potential emerging technology for the wider benefit of society and ensure we all have an equal chance to benefit from AI.

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At the heart of everything is education and ensuring that people are equipped to utilize emerging technologies such as AI

Dénelise L’Ecluse

Taking inspiration from sustainability

So how can we bridge the digital divide on AI and ensure education is there so all of us can benefit? We've already demonstrated that as a society we can partner for positive impact when we need to – for example, through global agreement on environmental goals including the UN Plastics Treaty[14] and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change[15]. Although there is more work to do on both issues, these agreements are nonetheless important steps forward and give me hope that we can come together and forge a positive way forward for AI inclusivity.

At present, many nations have AI strategies[16]. While they will rightly be different to meet specific market needs, our collective work on environmental issues is a compelling case study of how enhanced collaboration can take us far beyond the powers of individual nations.

Earlier this year the EU launched the AI Act[17], the world's first comprehensive AI law. Now is our moment to take this a step further and, as we have with sustainability goals, agree our technology goals on a global level. After all, AI is a global challenge and a global opportunity – and it can be best addressed globally too.

As a global organization, BSI has a clear role to play. Our work on the ISO Net Zero Guidelines, involved a conversation between hundreds of voices from over 100 countries. On AI, there is an opportunity to facilitate collaboration for new educational and inclusive technology guidelines – starting with the publication of the first AI management system standard.

100 countries

participated in the creation of the ISO Net Zero Guidelines.

Ready to flex?

The nature of today's society means being flexible is vital. How we use AI is going to change, and our response must adapt in line with this, drawing on collective intelligence. Against a backdrop of rapid technological acceleration, it's crucial that society has an 'audit process' to facilitate continuous improvement – for example, in our understanding of ever-evolving regulation.

As I assess today's AI landscape, I think it's important that we acknowledge that the world has many different views and cultures. But as high-profile collaborations on sustainability have demonstrated, such as the Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures[18], we have the opportunity to come together and achieve great things.

As the UN Secretary-General said, "we must dramatically improve accessibility and inclusivity and eliminate the digital divide". With nearly a quarter of people in our poll placing the use of AI to make society fairer or reducing social inequality as a top priority for 2050, there is cause for optimism.

As AI advances and we transition from limited AI to generative AI[19], society has the opportunity to help close the equality gap and bring AI to all, by collaborating on technology, education and oversight to meet the UN Sustainable Development Goals and ensure AI is a force for good.

23%

of people say the use of AI to make society fairer or reducing social inequality is a top priority for 2050.

Find out more

BSI has been shaping technology risk standards for decades and continues to partner with government, industry and wider stakeholders to champion digital governance that is for the good of society. Read more about the powerful role of AI collaboration here.

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